

THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR



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ARKHAM HOUSE IN 1969. Storage problems have become acute at Arkham House and have made necessary some drastic alterations in our 1969 publishing program. The revised schedule is as follows:

No. 7, QUEER STREET, by Margery Lawrence,
\$4.00 — June, 1969. (M&M)

TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS, by H.
P. Lovecraft & Others, \$6.50 — August, 1969.
(Arkham House)

THE FOLSOM FLINT AND OTHER CURIOUS
TALES, by David H. Keller, \$5.00 — October,
1969 (Arkham House)

THIRTY YEARS OF ARKHAM HOUSE, \$3.00
— December, 1969. (Arkham House)

OTHER DIMENSIONS, by Clark Ashton Smith,
\$6.50. — Early 1970. (Arkham House)

Contents of the Smith and Keller collections will be announced in our Summer 1969 issue.

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A LOVECRAFT REVISION. Among the papers of the late Robert H. Barlow, who died in 1951, there was uncovered a ten-page manuscript representing, in Barlow's script, a "Second draft, with Lovecraft's corrections — final text" of a story published subsequently only in an amateur

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press magazine, *The Californian*, in 1935, and here reprinted for the first time. Barlow's story is a mood-piece, a fantasy on the not unfamiliar theme of the last man on earth. Barlow sent the second draft along to Lovecraft in the course of their correspondence. It was never necessary for one of Lovecraft's creative correspondents to ask for suggestions for revision — Lovecraft almost invariably read with pen in hand and automatically made corrections or emendations as he went along. We reproduce the Lovecraft revision of the Barlow story herewith.

"TILL ALL THE SEAS"

Upon an eroded cliff-top rested the man, gazing far across the valley. Lying thus, he could see a great distance, but in all the sere expanse there was no visible motion. Nothing stirred the dusty plain, the disintegrated sand of long-dry river-beds, where once coursed the gushing streams of Earth's youth. There was little greenery in this ultimate world, this final stage of mankind's prolonged presence upon the planet. For unnumbered aeons the drought and sandstorms had ravaged all the lands. The trees and bushes had given way to small, twisted shrubs that persisted long through their sturdiness; but these, in turn, perished before the onslaught of coarse grasses and stringy, tough vegetation of strange evolution.

The ever-present heat, as Earth drew nearer to the sun, withered and killed with pitiless rays. It had not come at once; long aeons had gone before any could feel the change. And all through those first ages man's adaptable form had followed the slow mutation and modelled itself to fit the more and more torrid air. Then the day had come when men could bear their hot cities but ill, and a gradual recession began, slow yet deliberate. Those towns and settlements closest to the equator had been first, of course, but later there were others. Man, softened and exhausted, could cope

no longer with the ruthlessly mounting heat. It seared him as he was, and evolution was too slow to mould new resistances in him.

Yet not at first were the great cities of the equator left to the spiders and the scorpions. In the early years there were many who stayed on, devising curious shields and armours against the heat and the deadly dryness. These fearless souls, screening certain buildings against the encroaching sun, made miniature worlds of refuge wherein no protective armour was needed. They contrived marvellously ingenious things, so that for a while men persisted in the rusting towers, hoping thereby to cling to old lands till the searing should be over. For many would not believe what the astronomers said, and looked for a coming of the mild olden world again. But one day the men of Dath, from the new city of Niyara, made signals to Yuanario, their immemorially ancient capital, and gained no answer from the few who remained therein. And when explorers reached that millennial city of bridge-linked towers they found only silence. There was not even the horror of corruption, for the scavenger lizards had been swift.

Only then did the people fully realize that these cities were lost to them, know they must forever abandon them to nature. The other colonists in the hot lands fled from their brave posts, and total silence reigned within the high basalt walls of a thousand empty towns. Of the dense throngs and multitudinous activities of the past, nothing finally remained. There now loomed against the rainless deserts only the blistered towers of vacant houses, factories, and structures of very sort, reflecting the sun's dazzling radiance and parching in the more and more intolerable heat.

Many lands, however, had still escaped the scorching blight, so that the refugees were soon abandoned in the life of a newer world. During strangely prosperous centuries

the hoary deserted cities of the equator grew half-forgotten and entwined with fantastic fables. Few thought of those spectral, rotting towers, those huddles of shabby walls and cactus-choked streets, darkly silent and abandoned . . .

Wars came, sinful and prolonged, but the times of peace were greater. Yet always the swollen sun increased its radiance as earth drew closer to it's fiery parent. It was as if the planet meant to return to that source whence it was snatched, aeons ago, through the accidents of cosmic growth.

After a time, the blight crept outward from the central belt. Southern Yarat burned as a tenantless desert — and then the north. In Perath and Baling, those ancient cities where brooding centuries dwelt, there moved only the scaly shapes of the serpent and the salamander, and at last Loton echoed only to the fitful falling of tottering spires and crumbling domes.

Steady, universal, and inexorable was the great eviction of man from the realms he had always known. No land within the widening stricken belt was spared; no people left unrouted. It was an epic, a titan tragedy whose plot was unrevealed to the actors — this wholesale desertion of the cities of men. It took not years or even centuries, but millennia of ruthless change. And still it kept on — sullen, inevitable, savagely devastating.

Agriculture was at a standstill, the world fast became too arid for crops. This was remedied by artificial substitutes, soon universally used. And as the old places that had known the great things of mortals were left, the loot salvaged by the fugitives grew smaller and smaller. Things of the greatest value and importance were left in dead museums — lost amidst the centuries — and in the end the heritage of the immemorial past was abandoned. A degeneracy both physical and cultural set in with the insidious heat. For man had so long dwelt in comfort and security that this exodus from past scenes was difficult. Nor were these events

received phlegmatically; their very slowness was terrifying. Degradation and debauchery were soon common; government was disorganized, and the civilizations aimlessly slid back toward barbarism.

When, forty-nine centuries after the blight from the equatorial belt, the whole western hemisphere was left unpeopled, chaos was complete. There was no trace of order or decency in the last scenes of this titanic, wildly impressive migration. Madness and frenzy stalked through them, and fanatics screamed of an Armageddon close at hand.

Mankind was now a pitiful remnant of the elder races, a fugitive not only from the prevailing conditions, but from man's own degeneracy. Into the northland and the antarctic went those who could; the rest lingered for years in an incredible saturnalia, vaguely doubting the forthcoming disasters. In the city of Borligo a wholesale execution of the new prophets took place, after months of unfulfilled expectations. They thought the flight to the northland unnecessary, and looked no longer for the threatened ending.

How they perished must have been terrible indeed — those vain, foolish creatures who thought to defy the universe. But the blackened, scorched towns are mute . . .

Those events, however, must not be chronicled — for there are larger things to consider than this complex and unhastening downfall of a lost civilization. During a long period, morale was at lowest ebb among the courageous few who settled upon the alien arctic and antarctic shores, now mild as were those of southern Yarat in the long-dead past. But here there was respite. The soil was fertile, and forgotten pastoral arts were called into use anew. There was, for a long time, a contented little epitome of the lost lands; though here were no vast throngs or great buildings. Only a sparse remnant of humanity survived the aeons of change and peopled those scattered villages of the later world.

How many millennia this continued is not known. The sun was slow in invading this last retreat, and as the eras passed there developed a sound, sturdy race, bearing no memories or legends of the old, lost lands. Little navigation was practised by this new people, and the flying machine was wholly forgotten. Their devices were of the simplest type; and their culture was simple and primitive. Yet they were contented, and accepted the warm climate as something natural and accustomed.

But unknown to these simple peasant-folk, still further rigours of nature were slowly preparing themselves. As the generations passed, the waters of the vast and unplumbed ocean wasted slowly away, enriching the air and the dessicated soil, but sinking lower and lower each century. The splashing surf still glistened bright, and the swirling eddies were still there, but a doom of dryness hung over the whole watery expanse. However, the shrinkage could not have been detected save by instruments more delicate than any then known to the race. Even had the people realised the ocean's contraction, it is not likely that any vast alarm or great disturbance would have resulted, for the losses were so slight, and the seas so great Only a few inches during many centuries — but in many centuries, increasing . . .

† † †

So at last the oceans went, and water became a rarity on a globe of sun-baked drought. Man had slowly spread over all the arctic and antarctic lands; the equatorial cities, and many of later habitation, were forgotten even to legend.

And now again the peace was disturbed, for water was scarce, and found only in deep caverns. There was little enough, even of this; and men died of thirst wandering in far places. Yet so slow were these deadly changes, that each new generation of man was loath to believe what it heard from its parents. None would admit that the heat

had been less or the water more plentiful in the old days, or take warning that days of bitterer burning and drought were to come. Thus it was even at the end, when only a few hundred human creatures panted for breath beneath the cruel sun — a piteous huddled handful out of all the unnumbered millions who had once dwelt on the doomed planet.

And the hundreds became small, till man was to be reckoned only in tens. These tens clung to the shrinking dampness of the caves, and knew at last that the end was near. So slight was their range that none had ever seen the tiny, fabled spots of ice left close to the planet's poles — if such indeed remained. Even had they existed and been known to man, none could have reached them across the trackless and formidable deserts. And so the last pathetic few dwindled . . .

It cannot be described, this awesome chain of events that depopulated the whole earth; the range is too tremendous for any to picture or encompass. Of the people of Earth's fortunate ages, billions of years before, only a few prophets and madmen could have conceived that which was to come — could have grasped visions of the still, dead lands, and long-empty sea-beds. The rest would have doubted — doubted alike the shadow of change upon the planet and the shadow of doom upon the race. For man has always thought himself the immortal master of natural things . . .

II.

When he had eased the dying pangs of the old woman, Ull wandered in a fearful daze out into the dazzling sands. She had been a fearsome thing, shivelled and so dry, like withered leaves. Her face had been the colour of the sickly yellow grasses that rustled in the hot wind, and she was loathsomely old.

But she had been a companion; someone to stammer

out vague fears to, to talk to about this incredible thing: a comrade to share one's hopes for succor from those silent other colonies beyond the mountains. He could not believe none lived elsewhere, for Ull was young and not certain as are the old.

For many years he had known none but the old woman — her name was Mladdna. She had come that day in his eleventh year, when all the hunters went to seek food and did not return. Ull had no mother that he could remember, and there were few women in the tiny group. When the men vanished, those three women, the young one and the two old, had screamed fearfully and moaned long. Then the young one had gone mad and killed herself with a sharp stick. The old ones buried her in a shallow hole dug with their nails, so Ull had been alone when this still older Mladdna came.

She walked with the aid of a knotty pole, a priceless relique of the old forests, hard and shiny with years of use. She did not say whence she came, but stumbled into the cabin while the young suicide was being buried. There she waited till the two returned, and they accepted her incuriously.

That was the way it had been for many weeks, until the two fell sick and Mladdna could not cure them. Strange that those younger two should have been stricken while she, infirm and ancient, lived on! Mladdna had cared for them many days, and at length they died, so that Ull was left with only the stranger. He screamed all the night, so she became at length out of patience and threatened to die, too. Than, hearkening, he became quiet at once, for he was not desirous of complete solitude. After that he lived with Mladdna and they gathered roots to eat.

Mladdna's rotted teeth were ill suited to the food they gathered, but they contrived to chop it up till she could man-

age it. This weary routine of seeking and eating was Ull's childhood.

Now he was strong and firm, in his nineteenth year, and the old woman was dead. There was naught to stay for, so he determined at once to seek out those fabled huts beyond the mountains, and live with the people there. There was nothing to take on his journey. Ull closed the door of the cabin — why, he could not have told, for no animals had been there for many years — and left the dead woman within. Half-dazed and fearful at his own audacity, he walked long hours in the dry grasses and at length reached the first of the foothills. The afternoon came, and he climbed until he was weary, and lay down on the grasses. Sprawled there, he thought of many things. He wondered at the strange life, passionately anxious to seek out the lost colony beyond the mountains; but at last he slept.

When he awoke, there was starlight on his face and he felt refreshed. Now that the sun was done for a time, he travelled more quickly, eating little, and determining to hasten before the lack of water became difficult to bear. He had brought none; for the last people, dwelling in one place and never having occasion to bear their precious water away, made no vessels of any kind. Ull hoped to reach his goal within a day, and thus escape thirst; so he hurried on beneath the bright stars, running at times in the warm air, and at other times lapsing into a dogtrot.

So he continued until the sun rose, yet still he was within the small hills, with three great peaks looming ahead. In their shade he rested again. Then he climbed all the morning, and at mid-day surmounted the first peak, where he lay for a time, surveying the space before the next range.

Upon an eroded cliff-top Ull rested, gazing far across the valley. Lying thus, he could see a great distance, but in all the sere expanse there was no visible motion . . .

The second night came, and found Ull amidst the

rough peaks, the valley and the place where he had rested far behind. He was nearly out of the second range now and hurrying still. Thirst had come upon him that day, and he regretted his folly. Yet he could not have stayed there with the corpse, alone in the grasslands. He sought to convince himself thus, and hastened ever on, tiredly straining.

And now there were only a few steps before the cliff wall would part and allow a view of the land beyond. Ull stumbled wearily down the stony way, tumbling and bruising himself even more. It was nearly before him, this land where men were rumored to have dwelt, this land of which he had heard tales in his youth. The way was long, but the goal was great. A boulder of giant circumference cut off his view; upon this he scrambled anxiously. Now at last he could behold by the sinking orb his long-sought destination, and his thirst and aching muscles were forgotten as he saw joyfully that a small huddle of buildings clung to the base of the farther cliff.

Ull rested not, but, spurred on by what he saw, ran and staggered and crawled the half mile remaining. He fancied that he could detect forms among the rude cabins. The sun was nearly gone, the hateful, devastating sun that had slain humanity. He could not be sure of details, but soon the cabins were near.

They were very old, for clay blocks lasted long in the still dryness of the dying world. Little, indeed, changed but the living things — the grasses and these last men.

Before him an open door swung upon rude pegs. In the fading light Ull entered, weary unto death, seeking painfully the expected faces.

Then he fell upon the floor and wept, for at the table was propped a dry and ancient skeleton.

† † †

He rose at last, crazed by thirst, aching unbearably, and suffering the greatest disappointment any mortal could

know. He was, then, the last living thing upon the globe. His the heritage of the Earth — all the lands, and all to him equally useless. He staggered up, not looking at the dim white form in the reflected moonlight, and went through the doorway. About the empty village he wandered, searching for water and sadly inspecting this long-empty place so spectrally preserved by the changeless air. Here there was a dwelling — there a rude place where things had been made — clay vessels holding only dust — and nowhere any liquid to quench his burning thirst.

Then, in the centre of the little town, Ull saw a well-curb. He knew what it was, for he had heard tales of such things from Mladdna. With pitiful joy, he reeled forward and leaned upon the edge. There, at last, was the end of his search. Water — slimy, stagnant and shallow, but water — before his sight.

Ull cried out in the voice of a tortured animal, groping for the chain and bucket. His hand slipped on the slimy edge, and he fell upon his chest across the brink. For a moment he lay there, then soundlessly his body was precipitated down the black shaft.

There was a slight splash in the murky shallowness as he struck some long-sunken stone, dislodged aeons ago from the massive coping. The disturbed water subsided into quietness.

And now at last the earth was dead. The final, pitiful survivor had perished. All the teeming billions, the slow aeons, the empires and civilizations of mankind were summed up in this poor twisted form — and how titanically meaningless it all had been! Now indeed had come an end and climax to all the efforts of humanity — how monstrous and incredible a climax in the eyes of those poor complacent fools of the prosperous days! Not ever again would the planet know the thunderous tramping of human millions — nor even the crawling of lizards and the buzz of

insects, for they, too, had gone. Now was come the reign of sapless branches and endless fields of tough grasses. Earth, like its cold, imperturbable moon, was given over to silence and blackness forever.

The stars whirled on; the whole careless plan would continue for infinities unknown. This trivial end of a negligible episode mattered not to distant nebulae, or to suns new-born, flourishing, and dying. The race of man, too puny and momentary to have a real function or purpose, was as if it had never existed. To such a conclusion the aeons of its farcically toilsome evolution had led.

When the deadly sun's first rays darted across the valley, a light found its way to the weary face of a broken figure that lay in the slime.

† † †

(Lovecraft appended to the margin of the final page of this manuscript this note for Barlow: "Actually, insects & other life-forms will undoubtedly outlast man & his fellow-mammals.")

† † †

BLEAK NOVEMBER DAYS

Bleak November days,
burnished leaves ablaze,
grip me in a spell.
I wander like a wraith,
sans pride, or joy, or faith,
with griefs I cannot tell.

The icy wind's refrain
mocks at loss and pain
and hopes of long ago.
I weep for vanished times
as far-off evening chimes
toll down the changeless snow.

—Joseph Payne Brennan

LOVECRAFT'S LAST LETTER. H. P. Lovecraft's last letter has been the subject of some pieces in the fanzines over the past two decades or more, with various claims for letters received by correspondents, but in fact Lovecraft's last letter was never finished and it was not sent. Written over several days in March, 1937, the month of his death, it was addressed to his longtime correspondent, James F. Morton, whom he hailed as the "Pinnacled Pharos of Petrological Profundity"; it was found incomplete on his desk after his death March 15. It was a wide-ranging letter, touching upon many subjects, as the following excerpts indicate —

"October 9th I attended a meeting of the local organization of amateur astronomers — 'The Skyscrapers', which functions more or less under the auspices of Brown University — and was astonished at its degree of development. Some of the members are really serious scientific observers, and the society has recently purchased a well-known private observatory (that of the late F. E. Seagrave — whom Charles A. A. Parker once knew — with an 8" refracting telescope) in the western part of the state. It has separate meteor, variable star, planet, etc. sections, which hold meetings of their own and report as units, and enjoys the use of the college observatory. At the recent meeting there was an address on early Rhode Island astronomy and the reflecting telescope of Joseph Brown — used to observe the transit of Venus here on June 3, 1769 and owned by the college since 1870 — was exhibited.

"The unique feature of my autumnal explorations was that I succeeded in discovering several splendid rural regions within a three-mile radius of here *which I had never seen before*. One is a wooded hill — Nentaconhaunt — on the western rim of the town (much south of Friend Mariano), whence a series of marvellous views of the outspread city and adjacent countryside may be obtained. I had often

ascended it before, but the exquisitely mystical sylvan scenery beyond the crest — curious mounds, hummocked pastures, and hushed, hidden valleys — was wholly new to me. On October 28th I explored this region still further — including the country west of Nentaconhaunt and the western slopes of that eminence itself. At certain stages of this ramble I penetrated a terrain which took me half a mile from any spot I had ever trod before in the course of a long life. I followed a road which branches north and west from the Plainfield Pike, ascending a low rise which skirts Nentaconhaunt's western foot and which commands an utterly idyllic vista of rolling meadows, ancient stone walls, hoary groves, and distant cottage roofs to the west and south. Only two or three miles from the city's heart, and yet in the primal rural New England of the first colonists! Just before sunset I ascended the hill by a precipitous cart-path bordering an ancient wood, and from the dizzy crest obtained an almost stupefying prospect of unfolded leagues of farmsteads and champagnes, gleaming rivulets and far-off forests, and mystical orange sky with a great solar disc sinking redly amidst bars of stratus clouds. Entering the wood, I saw the actual sunset through the trees, and then turned east to cross the hill to that more familiar cityward slope which I have always known. Never before had I realised the great extent of Nentaconhaunt's surface. It is really a miniature plateau or table-land, with valleys, ridges, and summits of its own, rather than a simple hill. From some of its hidden interior meadows — remote from every sign of nearby human life — I secured truly marvellous glimpses of the remote urban skyline — a dream of enchanted pinnacles and domes half-floating in air, and with an obscure aura of mystery around them. The upper windows of some of the taller towers held the fire of the sun after I had lost it, affording a spectacle of cryptic and curious glamour. Then I saw the great yellow disc of the Hunt-

er's Moon (two days before full) floating above the belfries and minarets, while in the orange-glowing west Venus and Jupiter commenced to twinkle. My route across the plateau was varied — sometimes through the interior, but now and then getting toward the wooded edge where dark valleys slope down to the plain below, and huge balanced boulders on rocky heights impart a spectral, druidic effect as they stand out against the twilight. I did not begin to cover the full extent of the plateau, and can see that I have a field for several voyages of discovery when warm days return. Finally I came to more familiar ground — where the grassy ridge of an old buried aqueduct gives the illusion of one of those vestigial Roman roads in Machen's Caerleon country — and stood once more on the well-known eastward crest which I have gazed at since infancy. The outspread city was rapidly lighting up, and lay like a constellation in the deepening dusk. The moon poured increasing floods of pale gold, and the glow of Venus and Jupiter in the fading west grew intense. Then down the steep hillside to the car line and back to the prosaic haunts of man. . . .

"I trust that your Yule was duly festive. Ours here was commendably cheerful — including a turkey dinner at the boarding-house across the garden, with a congenial cat meandering among the tables and finally jumping up on the windowseat for a nap. We had a tree by the living-room fireplace — its verdant boughs thickly festooned with a tinsel imitation of Florida's best Spanish moss, and its outlines emphasised by a not ungraceful lighting system. Around its base were ranged the modest Saturnalian gifts — which included (on my side) a hassock tall enough to let me reach the top shelves of my bookcases, and (on my aunt's side) a cabinet of drawers for odds and ends, not unlike my own filing cabinets, but of more ladylike arrangement and aspect. Of outside gifts the most distinctive was perhaps that which came quite unexpectedly from one of the

kid fantasy fan group. (Willis Conover, Jun. of Cambridge, Md.) — for lo! when I had removed numberless layers of corrugated paper and excelsior, what should I find before me but the yellowed and crumbling fragments of *a long-interred human skull!* Verily, a fitting gift from a youthful ghoul to one of the hoary elders of the necropolitan clan! This sightlessly staring monument of mortality came from an Indian mound not far from the sender's home on the Maryland eastern shore — a place distinguished by many archaeological exploits on the part of Conover and his young friends. . . . Perhance some incantation droned out of the pages of the *Necronomicon* will have power to draw strange emanations from the lifeless and centuried clay, and raise up amidst the cobwebs of my ancient study a shimmering mist not without power to speak. In such a case, the revelation might be such that no man hearing it could any longer live save as one of those hapless entities "who laugh, but smile no more"! . . .

"Not much energy for reading these days, but some of my political-minded colleagues are bullying me into digesting Strachey's *Nature of Capitalist Crisis* and R. P. Dutt's *Fascism and Social Revolution*. A more voluntary piece of reading is the very excellent life of Thomas Holley Chivers by my next-door neighbour (literally, since his field of endeavour is in the marble library adjacent to No. 66) Prof. S. Foster Damon, and I have emerged from it with a new respect for the powers and genius of Poe's eccentric friend, rival, and imaginative kinsman. . . . He and Poe undoubtedly borrowed ideas, phrases, and metres from each other, yet in every case the borrowing was attended with such distinctive individual development that charges of plagiarism are absurd. . . .

"Speaking of American poetry — I saw the cinema of the recent drama *Winterset*, and found it impressively good despite the absurdly slipped-in happy ending. I had

heard great accounts of it, but was prepared to be disappointed because of the presumable conflict betwixt a modern setting and the poetic, conventionalised, consciously exaggerated and coincidence-ridden nature of the play. Actually, the effect was truly powerful. . . .

"During the past few months so many of my correspondents in the pest zone have been writing me about that display of fantastic and surrealist painting at the Museum of Modern Art that I'm hoping its travelling residue will include ancient Providence on its route. The group of elder sources — pictorial fantaisistes as far back as El Greco and Hell-Fire Bosch — would have especially fascinated me . . . but I fear it won't be included in the migratory aftermath. In general, though, I am not a surrealist enthusiast, for I think the practitioners of the school give their subconscious impressions too much automatic leeway. Not that the impressions are not potentially valuable, but that they tend to become trivial and meaningless except when more or less guided by some coherent imaginative concept. . . . If there were a real Richard Upton Pickman or Felix Ebbonly, I am sure he would have been represented in the recent exhibition by several blasphemous and abhorrent canvases! Better than the surrealists, though, is good old Nick Roerich, whose joint at Riverside Drive and 103rd Street is one of my shrines in the pest zone. There is something in his handling of perspective and atmosphere which to me suggests other dimensions and alien orders of being — or at least, the gateways leading to such. Those fantastic carven stones in lonely upland deserts — those ominous, almost sentient, lines of jagged pinnacles — and above all, those curious cubical edifices clinging to precipitous slopes and edging upward to forbidden needlelike peaks!!"

These were Lovecraft's last epistolary words. His last letter was a long one — of 21 pages; in it he touched upon such other subjects as Fritz Leiber and Leiber's novel,

Adept's Gambit; on August Derleth's first serious novel, *Still Is the Summer Night*; on the election of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt; on recent issues of *Weird Tales*, etc., etc. — and it is significant to note that the interests of his youth remained the interests of his middle age.

† † †

THE PURPLE DOOR

"Prosaic Earth," he said, "is not my haunt or lair;
Unknown shadows invade my nightmares, and insist:
Ramaj, that cryptic world of mauve and amethyst,
Patiently awaits the advent of my return;
Lavender moons, they urge, one night strangely shall burn;
Enter then I must, while both worlds converge."

"Dreams and fantasies," I said, "always were your
scourge."

Often I scoffed — but then, one night, streaks
warped and weird,
Obscured the stars, and as I stared, he disappeared.
Reason scoffed but purple motes danced upon the air.

—Walter Shedlofsky.

† † †

THE THING IN THE MOONLIGHT

I: by H. P. Lovecraft

Morgan is not a literary man; in fact he cannot speak English with any degree of coherency. That is what makes me wonder about the words he wrote, though others have laughed.

He was alone the evening it happened. Suddenly an unconquerable urge to write came over him, and taking pen in hand he wrote the following:

My name is Howard Phillips. I live at 66 College Street, in Providence, Rhode Island. On November 24, 1927 — for I know not even what the year may be now —, I fell asleep and dreamed, since when I have been unable to awaken.

My dream began in a dank, reed-choked marsh that lay under a gray autumn sky, with a rugged cliff of lichen-crusted stone rising to the north. Impelled by some obscure quest, I ascended a rift or cleft in this beetling precipice, noting as I did so the black mouths of many fearsome burrows extending from both walls into the depths of the stony plateau.

At several points the passage was roofed over by the choking of the upper parts of the narrow fissure; these places being exceeding dark, and forbidding the perception of such burrows as may have existed there. In one such dark space I felt conscious of a singular accession of fright, as if some subtle and bodiless emanation from the abyss were engulfing my spirit; but the blackness was too great for me to perceive the source of my alarm.

At length I emerged upon a tableland of moss-grown rock and scanty soil, lit by a faint moonlight which had replaced the expiring orb of day. Casting my eyes about, I beheld no living object; but was sensible of a very peculiar stirring far below me, amongst the whispering rushèd of the pestilential swamp I had lately quitted.

After walking for some distance, I encountered the rusty tracks of a street railway, and the worm-eaten poles which still held the limp and sagging trolley wire. Following this line, I soon came upon a yellow, vestibuled car numbered 1852 — of a plain, double-trucked type common from 1900 to 1910. It was untenanted, but evidently ready to

start; the trolley being on the wire and the air-brake now and then throbbing beneath the floor. I boarded it and looked vainly about for the light switch — noting as I did so the absence of the controller handle, which thus implied the brief absence of the motorman. Then I sat down in one of the cross seats of the vehicle. Presently I heard a swishing in the sparse grass toward the left, and saw the dark forms of two men looming up in the moonlight. They had the regulation caps of a railway company, and I could not doubt but that they were conductor and motorman. Then one of them *sniffed* with singular sharpness, and raised his face to howl to the moon. The other dropped on all fours to run toward the car.

I leaped up at once and raced madly out of that car and across endless leagues of plateau till exhaustion forced me to stop — doing this not because the conductor had dropped on all fours, but because the face of the motorman was a mere white cone tapering to one blood-red tentacle.

...

I was aware that I only dreamed, but the very awareness was not pleasant.

Since that fearful night, I have prayed only for awakening — it has not come!

Instead I have found myself an *inhabitant* of this terrible dreamworld; That first night gave way to dawn, and I wandered aimlessly over the lonely swamp-lands. When night came, I still wandered, hoping for awakening. But suddenly I parted the weeds and saw before me the ancient railway car — and to one side a cone-faced thing lifted its head and in the streaming moonlight howled strangely!

It has been the same each day. Night takes me always to that place of horror. I have tried not moving, with the coming of nightfall, but I must walk in my slumber, for always I awaken with the thing of dread howling before me in the pale moonlight, and I turn and flee madly.

God! when will I awaken?

That is what Morgan wrote. I would go to 66 College Street in Providence, but I fear for what I might find there.

II: by Brian Lumley

“ . . . my own dreams being particularly vivid and real — to such an extent that I never know for sure whether or not I am dreaming until I wake up — I would not like to argue which world is the more vital: the waking world or the world or the world of dream. Certainly the waking world is the more solid; but consider what science tells us about the atomic make-up of so-called solids — and what are you left with . . . ?”

—Gerhard Schrach

It has been written of Howard Phillips that for him “there was no such thing as ‘sleep’ in the ordinary meaning or usage of the word; he passed directly from the waking world into an equally vivid and detailed dream-world, complete with conversations, odors, colours, and the feel of objects and taste of viands, but always with fantastic settings and adventures toward impending dooms and horrors in dreams that were seldom chaotic or jumbled, but often developed step by step like well-constructed narratives.” I cannot help but wonder if the writer of those words *fully* appreciated the validity of their content; for to me, knowing what I now know, that is an incontrovertible statement of terrible fact as pertinent now to myself as it was to Howard Phillips — an irrefutable truth which, while I am unable to understand the unnatural forces that make it so, fills me with awe and horror.

I had never met Howard Phillips in real life — but I did once meet him, almost, in dream. Not that I had ever been a great dreamer of horrors myself; yet the dreams I have known — and one in particular — have been detestable things that have haunted my subconscious until long

after my return through the barrier of sleep to the comparative safety of the waking world. I wish now that I was never drawn to read any of Howard Phillips's work — that I never had indulged the strange need to collect those laboriously detailed nightmares he termed "stories".

Just when it was I recognized the dark affinity between Phillips and myself I cannot say. Certainly his tales fascinated me, binding me in those *outré* yet absolutely authentic spells of which he was undoubtedly the master-weaver. But it was not until I read *The Thing in the Moonlight* that I really became aware of something out of the ordinary. From the moment I started to read it, from the opening description of the reedchoked marsh beneath grey autumn skies to the advent of the cone-faced things in the motor-men's caps, I fell completely under the spell of the story — so much so that I came to *know* it intimately, almost as if I had written the story myself.

It gradually dawned on me that this was much more than just a story. I recognized the very feel of the words and the texture of the mood. I actually *knew* the cleft in the beetling precipice which Howard Phillips had climbed in his dream. I had seen the mouths of the burrows which he described extending into the depths of the stony plateau to which he had ascended. I had known, as had he, those exceedingly dark places wherein dwelt subtle and bodiless emanations from the abyss; but I did not remember ever fearing them. And I, too, in some remote and all but forgotten existence, had cast my eyes over that table-land of moss-grown rock and scanty soil lit by faint moonlight. I dimly *remembered* those rusty, unused tracks of the street railway and the worm-eaten poles straining to hold aloft their limp and sagging burden of rotting trolley wire; and also the yellow double-trucked, vestibuled trolley-car — it, too, was part of that inexplicably familiar dream world.

I suppose it was but natural that the thing should

come to me that night. No sooner had I laid my tired head upon the pillow than I was there — I was in that region of lonely swamp-lands, streaming moonlight, and weeds. Oh! it was real — so real that I did not even remember going to bed, I knew nothing whatever of my waking life. I had *always* been in that land; I was part of it . . . Nor was I alone. I did not look at my companion, for I had seen him often before; we had a job to do and were on our way to do it. Behind us friendly burrows gaped in the darkness of beetling crag-cast shadows as we crossed the weird, yet well-known and convivial terrain of long grasses and weeds.

After walking for some distance in silence, we encountered the familiar rusty tracks of the street railway and following these we soon came upon the yellow, vestibuled car — number 1852 — which I had known, of course, would be there and waiting. But, as we made our way through the grass to the left of the car, I noticed something in the air — a presence in conflict with the norm of the place.

In that instant, as I suddenly remembered the real waking world, I gasped aloud — and was horrified that my gasp, rather than being an involuntary exhalation, came to my ears as a monstrously altered animal grunt or sniff. In the flooding moonlight I glanced up at the car, and saw a man.

Not just *any* man. This was no stranger sitting there. It was Howard Phillips. Phillips had dreamed the dream from which the story had been constructed — and I was in that dream — and *it was Phillips I saw sitting there, staring at me in horror*. I knew him at once, and shouted his name in awe and bewilderment. But it was not a shouted name echoed back — rather was it the cry of a beast!

And suddenly I knew. I knew that *I* was the thing in the moonlight; and, as Phillips fled from his seat, I turned to see my silent companion drop to all fours and hurl himself in the direction of the car.

In awful, stunned disbelief, I put my hand — my paw
— up to my face and felt that — that . . .

Mercifully, I awoke.

A dream? Only a nightmare brought on by too much
reading and too vivid an imagination? Perhaps. Yet now,
while others lie drowning in dream, I am left to toss and
turn upon my bed, clawing desperately at the wall of sleep,
afraid to close my eyes in the terrifying knowledge that the
world which lies just across the dark threshold of dream
is real!

*As real as the crumpled and mildewed motorman's
cap I found on waking beside my tumbled, sweat-soaked
bed . . .*

† † †

TO AN INFANT

They have captured and chained you, my brother,
from Aidenns beyond the blue,
The Fates and the vast All-Mother, to laugh at an hour
or two.
They had enveyed your wings dilated, beating heedless
of age or clime,
So they snared you and cast you weighted into dungeons
of space and time.
And now as you newly languish in the quivering bonds
called flesh,
Unknowing as yet the anguish and gall of the long-felt
mesh,
They smile as they find you comely, and gloat on their
ancient power
To twist you and drive you dumbly for the sport of a
listless hour.
They have given you joy but to take it, and youth
but to snatch it away,

They have made you a will but to break it, and hope
but to lead you astray;
They have bound you to objects inutile, and senses
that shut out the light,
That themselves, who are bitter and futile, may laugh
as you grope in their sight.
But you, if you will, can cheat them, and join in
the mocking mirth,
For you have that to defeat them which could not be
chained at birth:
Though your heart they have trussed and tethered,
and your soul they have stricken drear,
Yet a spark from your dreams has weathered all
the whirlwinds that swept you here.
It has slipt by the onyx portal that holds you
to earthly things,
From the crystalline gulfs immortal, that sounded
once to your wings.
It will flame through the mists of morning
and lighten the hours of your youth,
Till the blaze of its bright adorning will banish
the clouds of truth.
But foster it well, young dreamer, lest the covetous
Great Ones call
On Time, the malign Arch-Schemer, to gather it
into his thrall;
For dreams, as they are most precious, are most fragile
of all we prize,
And the powers of earth that enmesh us would sear
them out of our eyes;
Would marshall the years to slay them, and drive them
beyond our reach.
They are all that we have to save us from the sport
of the Ruthless Ones,

These dreams that the cosmos gave us in the void past
 the farthest suns;
 They are freedom and light surviving as a flicker in
 cells of ill,
 As against the Dark Gods' contriving we must harbour
 and guard them still.
 So may you, in whose eyes serenely so much
 of the old lore shines,
 Grow valiant, and battle keenly the envious Gods' designs;
 Dissolve when they seek to bind you; fling worlds
 at their clanking chain;
 That never their noose may find you, and never
 their whim restrain.
 Weave magic against their weaving, dream out of
 their sly duress,
 Till the prisons of their deceiving shall crumble
 to nothingness.
 Mock back when they storm your reason, and hold you
 from all you crave,
 For your body alone they seize on — no dream
 can be made a slave.
 Deride all their empty offers, and sneer at their
 specious lure,
 Enriching your fancy's coffers with gold that is
 always pure.
 Your dreams are yourself, so tend them as all
 that preserves you free;
 With all of your strength defend them, nor grant
 to the years a fee;
 Let never a daemon buy them with pleasures
 that flash and fade,
 Nor sophistry's tongue defy them, nor dogma
 diffuse its shade.
 For these are your own, my brother, and hold
 in their boundless sweep

The wings that the Gods would smother, and the key
to your native deep!

—H. P. Lovecraft

August 26, 1925.

† † †

MEMORIES OF LOVECRAFT: I. Sonia Haft Lovecraft Davis, who was married to H. P. Lovecraft in the 1920s and divorced by mutual consent late in that decade, has written some paragraphs about Lovecraft in letters to the editor. The following excerpts are from her letters —

“It is not true that H. P. L. liked other weird tale writers better than Poe. Poe was his first inspiration — in fact, in his early youth when he first read Poe, he identified his own imagination with that of Poe. His first Poe story was *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. From then on he read most avidly the rest of Poe’s writings and often referred to them. In later years he admired and almost worshipped Arthur Machen and other modern writers, but so great an admirer was he of Poe’s, that he took me to many places Poe had visited, particularly to Poe’s Cottage, now a museum. . . .

“As a child H. P. L. was not only far from being ‘hideous’ but he was a very beautiful baby with flaxen curls, beautiful brown eyes and an engaging smile. As a boy of six he was still a very handsome and interesting-looking child. As a married man he was an adequately excellent lover, but refused to show his feelings in the presence of others. He shunned promiscuous association with women before his marriage. Living a normal life and eating the food I provided made him take on much extra weight, which was quite becoming to him. He also learned to laugh heartily and more frequently. . . .

“If H. P. L. could not be described as facially handsome, he had an interesting atmosphere about him that attracted people, making them curious almost to admiration.

Unfortunately he was conditioned by his poor demented mother to believing himself badlooking. . . .

"H. P. was inarticulate in expressions of love except to his mother and to his aunts, to whom he expressed himself quite vigorously; to all other it was expressed by deep appreciation only. One way of expression of H.P.'s sentiment was to wrap his 'pinkey' finger around mine and say 'Umph!' . . .

"H. P. used to speak of his mother as a 'touch-me-not' and once — but once only — he confessed to me that his mother's attitude toward him was 'devastating'. . . . In my opinion, the elder Lovecraft, having been a travelling salesman for the Gotham Silversmiths, and his wife being a 'touch-me-not', took his sexual pleasures wherever he could find them; for H. P. never had a sister or a brother, and his mother, probably having been sex-starved against her will, lavished both her love and her hate on her only child. . . .

"During our marriage we often went to theatres, sometimes to the Taormina, a favorite Italian restaurant, where H. P. L. learned to eat minestrone and spaghetti with parmesan cheese, which he loved. But he balked at the wine. . . . Sometimes we went to the movies, but more often to some hidden, weird places in Prospect Park, visiting an old Indian burying ground. Occasionally we went to 'Blue Pencil' meetings at the homes of other members."

† † †

MEMORIES OF LOVECRAFT: II. Helen Sully, (now Mrs. George Trimble of Auburn, California) a friend of Clark Ashton Smith's, was given a letter of introduction to Lovecraft by Smith when she traveled east in the summer of 1933. She was driven to Providence to meet Lovecraft by the family of Frank Belknap Long.

"At that time, Mr. Lovecraft lived at 66 College Street with his aunt, Mrs. Annie Gamwell, who was bed-

ridden. He had arranged that I should be put up at a boardinghouse close by. . . . I was impressed by the old-world courtliness in all of Mr. Lovecraft's actions and words. We had dinner together and then he took me for a walk to show me some of the interesting and historical buildings of the neighborhood. This took in quite a large area because he seemed tireless. He showed me his favorite doorways and some especially beautiful fanlights, and I remember particularly that he pointed out certain features of the Rhode Island School of Design. Apparently he had a great knowledge of colonial architecture.

"Mr. Lovecraft was an authority on gravestones, and one day we went to a graveyard in Newburyport, and he taught me the various styles of carvings: the deaths head with wings, cherubim, weeping willow, urn, fountain, lamb, etc. . . . On another day we went down Narragansett Bay to Newport. During the trip he gave me an historical background of what we were to see. I noticed that whenever he had occasion to refer to the American Revolution he called it 'the Rebellion' and spoke of it with regret. He pointed out the *Constellation*, sister ship of the *Constitution*, and deplored its neglect; I believe that it was lying over on its side in the mud flats, though it was later restored.

"In Newport, we first visited a graveyard and then went into the synagogue, the oldest in America. . . . Then we walked the length of the street on which the mansions of the great and wealthy faced; he seemed to know the names of most of the owners. We ended our walk at the farthest tip of the peninsula, sitting on the rocks and discussing how the sea might eventually furnish food for the world, as we nibbled on sea lettuce. He seemed to have unlimited knowledge of so many diverse subjects, historical, philosophical, and literary. Nor have I ever seen a more indefatigable walker or a more enthusiastic person.

"At noon he treated me to a New England boiled dinner. He ordered one for himself, but hardly ate a bite. In this connection, I must mention his passion for ice cream; he told me he was going to treat me to more than a dozen varieties of ice cream at the end of our walk, before we took the boat back. I do not care for ice cream particularly and was really horrified to see his enjoyment of so many kinds, amounting to such a quantity of the brightly-colored, highly-flavored, ice-cold stuff, especially when I had observed that he ate so little of wholesome foods. . . .

"That night, after dinner, he took me into a graveyard associated with Poe. . . . It was dark, and he began to tell me strange, weird stories in a sepulchral tone and, despite the fact that I am a very matter-of-fact person, something about his manner, the darkness, and a sort of eerie light that seemed to hover over the gravestones got me so wrought up that I began to run out of the cemetery with him close at my heels, with the one thought that I must get up to the street before he, or whatever it was, grabbed me. I reached a street lamp, trembling, panting, and almost in tears, and he had the strangest look on his face, almost of triumph. Nothing was said.

"I left next day. I wrote to thank him for his kindness. I believe that he was very poor at the time, and yet he insisted on paying the bill at the boarding-house as well as for all the trips and meals; and wherever we went he bought me souvenir post cards, etc., of the various places we visited. He was very fond of those fold-up sets of scenes of towns and I have a great many of them with his comments sent from places to which he travelled. He was a fascinating companion, teacher, and guide."

IN MEMORIAM: H. P. LOVECRAFT

I.

From far-flung fields of wind-stirred daffodils,
Pale echoes of the past recall the days
When men, content to walk in simple ways,
By living selflessly forgot their ills;
When tinkling music from fresh mountain rills
Did form the fount from which they tuned their lays,
And fused fragrances of many Mays
Made Nature seem at one with human wills.

Now noisy streets wind aimlessly among
Walls crumbling and deformed as human souls,
And Reason fights to gain ignoble goals;
Man to his brother and himself is foe,
And Beauty is to all a foreign tongue:
Where is a man from better days to go?

II.

The past was always to his soul a home:
Two hundred years before his time he found
A sweeter and more solid-seeming ground
Than was the present age's lowly loam.
Through decades past, his fancy loved to roam;
Through times whose mild and less discordant sound
The years had mellowed even more; around
The witchéd imagery of some old tome.

The writer's art was ever his first love;
His life of work and wisdom who can deem
A mere retreat into an idle dream?
He lived the way he chose, and did succeed
In bringing to the world from spheres above

His "life and works", great legacy, indeed!

III.

The gift he had of Poe: of capturing
The fierce, black moods and images of fear;
The landscape wondrous bright or dark and drear;
The fleeting sense of horror on the wing
O'er unknown chasms of the mind; the Thing
Glimpsed from the window, with its evil leer
(The Thing which in that window oft must peer,
As whippoorwills at twilight loudly sing).

Dark pasts linked to the present: this to him
Formed all the understructure of that art
He used so well for clutching at the heart.
His brain, imbued with lore from ages past,
Brought forth those mystic tales of glamor dim
By which his memory will live at last.

IV.

A scholar-recluse, living in an age
Which would not grant him praise, or even scorn;
Outsider since the day that he was born;
A buried saint, perhaps, or misused sage;
A man without a decent living wage;
A mystic, by Man's brutish habits torn;
A seer of sunsets, and of nights forlorn; —
No wonder dark and fearsome is his page!

A "man of letters" he; his missives found
Friends of his kind, with matching mind and soul,
Others who felt their distance from the goal
As much as he, mistaken, did. And now

His strife is done; he rests in unmarked mound,
While leaves of laurel crown his spirit's brow.

—James Wade



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL. A new Arkham House catalog-stocklist — the thirtieth anniversary listing — is now available to all patrons who ask for it. . . . Readers of the Lovecraft letters who have noticed frequent mention of Vrest Orton of Weston, Vermont, will be interested to learn that the July 1968 issue of *Yankee* (Dublin, N. H., 03444) contains an article by Bradley Ward, *The Voice of the Green Mountains*, the subject of which is that same Vrest Orton, who is now the proprietor of two famed old-time country stores in Weston and Rockingham, Vermont. . . . The June issue of *The Tutter Bugle*, a publication devoted to juvenile detective fiction, contains an appreciation of August Derleth's Mill Creek Irregulars by J. Randolph Cox. . . . Readers of the pro-zines in the fantasy field will recall a deprecating review of Colin Wilson's *The Mind Parasites* by one Joanna Russ. Joanna has now published a science-fiction novel of her own in paperback titled *Picnic on Paradise*, but, judging by reviews, she is no more ept as writer of fiction than she is as critic. The prestigious *Publisher's Weekly* calls it "disappointing . . . Much of the dialog is pointless or obscure," and generally takes a dim view of it.

The Lovecraft-Derleth novel, *The Lurker at the Threshold*, was published this past October by Messrs. Victor Gollancz of London. For those eager readers who cannot wait upon its reprinting in an omnibus of all the Lovecraft-Derleth tales by Arkham House, we can supply copies at \$4 each. . . . Gollancz have also published some scattered Lovecraft tales and most of the short Lovecraft-

Derleth tales under the title of *The Shadow out of Time and Other Tales of Horror*, and the book has excited some amusing and interesting reviews. For example, Benedict Nightingale commits heresy when he writes: "The best, most economical stories in this collection are those finished by . . . August Derleth." Taking exactly the opposite view one B. A. Young, writing in *Punch*, dismisses these stories in toto as Lovecraft's "minor works" — which is something of a new high in bad judgment considering that the overwhelming majority of critics, including even America's most eminent critic, Edmund Wilson, hold *The Shadow out of Time* to be H. P. Lovecraft's finest story.

Luther Norris (3844 Watseka Avenue, Culver City, Cal. 90230) has just published *The Sherlockian Doyle* (\$3.00) containing the two Doyle stories, *The Man with the Watches* and *The Lost Special*, with a special introduction by Lord Donegall and illustrations by Roy Hunt. The introduction includes summaries of the perplexing literary problems the two stories have given rise to over the years. A limited edition. . . . Oldtime patrons of Arkham House will remember that we once announced, then cancelled, publication of *The House by the Churchyard*, by J. Sheridan Le Fanu. This splendid macabre novel has now been brought back into print in the Doughty Library under the imprint of Stein & Day of New York. The introduction is by Elizabeth Bowen, one of the world's greatest living novelists. The novel runs to 560 pages, and sells at \$6.95 the copy.

The Rohmer Review, a non-profit literary magazine dedicated to the works of Sax Rohmer, edited and published for the Sax Rohmer Society at 365 Centenary Drive, Baton Rouge, La. 70808, \$1.00 per year, has made its appearance. Decorations by Roy Hunt. . . . *Weirdbook*, published at Box 601, Chambersburg, Pa. 17201, 8 issues for

\$3.75, is a new magazine in the field. The first issue contains hitherto unpublished fiction by Robert E. Howard, Joseph Payne Brennan, H. Warner Munn and others, as well as new and reprint poetry. Aficionados will find it interesting and deserving of support. The editor is W. Paul Ganley. . . . Joel Frieman, at 5 Manor Drive 10A, Newark, N. J. 07106, publishes some tributes to *Weird Tales* by E. Hoffman Price, Frank B. Long, Robert Bloch and others under title of *Deeper Than You Think*, at \$1.25 the copy. No fiction, no verse.